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More RV layoffs in Michiana, yet \$10.4 million offered in help

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Another blow to the business that Michiana relies on to bring in the bucks, more layoffs in the RV industry. [A](#) | [A](#) | [A](#)

With that bad news, came some good news.

Hours after Flexsteel Industries laid off about 130 workers at its New Paris Plant, Governor Mitch Daniels got word the state will get \$10.4 million to help displaced RV workers 

There's no question, it's been rough lately for that industry. Companies have laid off thousands of workers in the last year.

Flexsteel workers and the small community of New Paris say their stress level dropped a little Wednesday when they heard about Governor Daniels coming to their rescue, but some still aren't confident the local economy will bounce back anytime soon.

In homes and in businesses on the streets of New Paris some are in panic mode.

Charlie Green says, "A bunch of them cried and all that."

That's because when Green and about 130 others showed up for work Wednesday morning, they were told the doors are closing.

The New Paris plant that makes furniture for RV's will move operations to Dubuque, Iowa in early November.

The reason, the same as the several other companies that closed doors in Michiana this year.

Flexsteel's CEO says, "continued poor conditions in the recreational vehicle industry."

Green says he's only worked there for two and a half years. Yes, he relied on that paycheck to support his wife and three kids, but he really feels sorry for those who spent half their lives here.

Melanie Johns feels the same way. She's seen a lot of sad faces walk through town and pass the doors of Simply Sweet.

Johns says, "It has been very slow here because of all the turnover and people getting laid off. I would love to see people get their jobs back.

Johns was somewhat relieved to hear about a \$10.4 million grant for laid off RV workers.

The goal is to get them educated and trained for occupations that need employees.

Governor Mitch Daniels says, "I hope folks will take advantage. We've got great jobs waiting. We just can't stop for a day because the national economy isn't helping us out."

Green agrees with the Governor. He's not wasting any time and he hopes others follow his lead.

Green says, "If they don't, you're going to have a lot of people on welfare and stealing trying to make a living."

Even with the news of Governor Daniels' help, people in New Paris say they're still pretty upset as they continue to watch the RV industry lose more and more jobs. They worry that it will never be the same.

Governor Daniels says he has a lot of confidence the RV industry will bounce back.

Find this article at:

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22 to lose jobs in Neb. plant layoffs

Associated Press - August 13, 2008 12:25 PM ET

HASTINGS, Neb. (AP) - Automotive parts manufacture Eaton Corp. has announced it will lay off 22 workers at its Hastings plant.

The company is asking for people to voluntarily resign and has given workers until Aug. 22 before it begins laying off workers.

The plant manufactures parts for axles on sport utility vehicles and trucks.

The layoffs are the latest in a series of ups and downs the plant has experienced this year.

In March, the company laid off 64 of 88 workers following a strike by American Axle & Manufacturing Holdings. A month later, it hired back 52 of those workers.

The latest layoffs are being blamed on a decline in pickup and SUV sales. Company officials say the layoffs are expected to be permanent.

Information from: KHAS-TV, <http://www.khastv.com>

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Fuel prices cited in trucking layoffs

Staff and wire reports
Tuesday, March 18, 2008

A Scott County trucking company has laid off just over half its work force, citing rising fuel costs as the reason.

Randy Stephens, general manager with DRC Express, said those truck drivers would be brought back to work if fuel costs come down.

DRC Express has 41 employees, and the layoffs of 23 people are effective Friday, March 21, Stephens said.

He said the fuel costs have really been "putting a pinch" on the company, which at one point was up for sale. DRC hauls general freight, Stephens said.

Soaring diesel and gasoline costs have hurt many companies. Diesel prices rose Monday to a record, above \$4 a gallon, and gas prices remained high. Diesel, used in the transport of the vast majority of the nation's goods, rose 1.3 cents to a national average of \$4.002 a gallon Monday, according to AAA and the Oil Price Information Service. The national average price of a gallon of gas, meanwhile, dipped slightly to \$3.283 a gallon, but remains 73 cents higher than a year ago.

Diesel's surge is hitting the nation's truckers particularly hard, said Bill Graves, chief executive of the American Trucking Association.

"There is little to suggest that fuel prices will decline anytime soon," Graves said in a statement. "Escalating fuel prices are hurting (truckers') businesses and affecting their livelihood."

While diesel prices continued to rise Monday, oil prices plunged, pulling back at least temporarily from record levels as investors feared that the financial crisis that forced the sale of Bear Stearns Cos. is a sign of deep economic trouble.

A retreat in the oil market could spell relief for consumers. Higher energy prices have by themselves forced consumers to make discretionary-spending cutbacks, a trend that has hurt retail sales. Higher costs for fuel have also driven the price of everything else higher.

Still, gas prices are expected to rise as demand picks up in the spring and summer. In its most recent forecast, the Energy Department said it expects gas prices to rise to about \$3.50 a gallon, while many analysts say prices could peak between \$3.75 and \$4. Those estimates could fall if oil remains on the retreat.



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